

# Bard

Bard College  
**Bard Digital Commons**

---

Robert Kelly Manuscripts

Robert Kelly Archive

---

2-2001

febB2001

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)

---

## Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febB2001" (2001). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 1024.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/1024](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1024)

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Robert Kelly Archive at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Robert Kelly Manuscripts by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

# Bard

---

Agitate the Marais, flog new money  
till it bruises into public benefaction  
bright blue contusions of philanthropy,  
a school a temple but no more museums,  
no more carnivals of chic. Just art  
alone with a dull old teacher and an angry God.

8 February 2001

---

In the Engadin I never  
but in the Alps  
one time in France  
I saw a flower  
blue as the sky  
I had to climb up into  
to find it  
just under the lip  
of the highest rock,  
breathless the both of us,  
too holy hushed  
to say its name.

8 February 2001

---

Archetype, analyst

I speak your hair

And you listen carefully  
because the shadows  
are in the room now  
and they mean more than I do

reflect, with all the due  
distortions, the actual shape  
of what casts them

what obscurations of the common light

I bring to what you are

and all the while  
I breathe the permission  
of your hair

the walls tilt inward  
but do not fall.

8 February 2001

## A VISIT TO THE gDEUX

Nothing comes near the river  
stilts bear the nimble house

where no one sleeps

we would not sleep beneath a roof  
since there the animal of earth  
could find us

our only safety is the sky  
and so we sleep out there

(gestures towards the raked half acre  
above the tide line)

in here we talk and eat and do the secret things  
a man needs a woman or another man to do

and in the sky we only sleep

nothing can hurt us when we're unprotected.

2.

nonetheless there is a stout stockade  
around the whole compound

nonetheless there are clouds in the sky

are clouds a problem?

Not for us...for you maybe? Clouds  
are just the people of the sky,

without them we wouldn't have much to dream.

And do you tell your dreams?

(coughs) only when they involve somebody else  
then we tell him or her or them or all of us

otherwise a dream that's just of me  
or nobody at all

a rock maybe or an animal I'm not  
that dream has been told already  
by someone else to me

I don't have to bother further with it.

Is there a special ceremony of telling your dreams?  
I speak you listen.

8 February 2001

## ANOTHER AFTERNOON AMONG THE gDEUX

But why don't you want to tell me what's in that calabash  
or in the big crab shell you've sealed with clay and baked in seaweed  
is it because I don't want to tell you what's in my radio  
because the words for that kind of knowledge are not like other words  
they only point to other words and never an end to them  
and never a word that points outside of language  
the way you or I could point to a goat wandering in the trees?

That's not a goat that's a *srlex*. A goat is only  
something that doesn't have blue horns.

8 February 2001

=====

but why do you sleep  
why do you wake

why do you answer every question with a question  
what other kind of answer is there

a kind that settles the issue once and for all  
there is no issue there is no all and there is nothing seldomer than twice.

8 February 2001



---

Catch this. Nobody threw it,  
a road, no flowers yet, snow  
still in business, but a road,

no ball (catch it!)  
no hand (take my hand

I have been in love with you so long  
it feels like living.

9 February 2001

## **AN IDEA**

Cast it aside  
like the involucre  
(the what?) of a flower

(which one?  
and you used that word  
already this year  
or last, there is no telling)

no telling in a word  
nobody knows

a mile and a half up your skirt  
where another vocabulary begins.

9 February 2001

## CUT TO THE CACKLE

Things tend to fall away from themselves  
we bring them back  
the War of Northern Aggression  
recoils on southern Pennsylvania

but he rode *his own horse*  
into the battle of Gettysburg

they said about their grandfather  
though only the meagerest imagery  
accompanies the white horse

his uniform, for instance,  
rank, regiment, all lost  
in the refining fire of forgetfulness  
where all our sins and saints get washed away.

Now wait a minute. Things  
have roots and branches, water  
is not fire. Yes, but which are you?

I am an arm  
flexed to wield a little chisel  
gouging truisms into innocent clay,  
I am observation without intensity,  
intensity without an object, object without

wait a minute, this is getting formulaic,  
stop it, this is a *town*  
and those are *people*. Those  
are the ones you were born for,

to take care of them and make them happy.  
No, wait, nobody can make anybody happy.  
It's something that happens or doesn't happen.  
That's why they call it what they do.  
But you've got to take care of them anyhow.

9 February 2001

---

There are places named for other places, like Paris.  
And there are places named for themselves. Paris,  
For example, the place in France.

---

But black against the blue sky  
Stand at crazy angles  
The last standing basalt columns of Chorazin.  
And what does it mean to stand against the sky?

9 February 2001

---

not thinking of that

let the other side  
of what's always going on  
go on, cheek  
pressed softly to the glass

(goblet, mirror,  
the matter matters  
not the use of it

for now,  
the touch of a thing  
is window enough)

10 February 2001

---

## **BONSAI**

trim it  
to fit  
the world it  
lives in

green by custom  
and wet  
half way up the staff

drowned in the senses  
still lift  
a sense of form

10 February 2001

---

chipped out of the matrix  
a citrine pyramid  
with a smaller faintly  
seen inside it: phantom

amber inside amber  
conducting to prosperity

money comes suddenly  
like an animal vomiting  
something the world  
absolutely wants

10 February 2001



## FEBRUARY SCIENCE

Only partially the case, photosynthesis takes care  
of introducing from beyond the galaxy  
into our planetary shield those balsamic  
essences the vulgar call Light. Which in its  
hunger to return to its primal Everywhere Else  
rushes up through every vase and vessel  
to stand green erect and quivering Take this rose.  
Happy Valentine. It grew for neither of us  
yet I give it to you now notionally, some  
other afternoon pragmatically, in that fluent  
hypocrisy of space the vulgar call Time.

10 February 2001

---

I like red brick  
And that's a fact  
If I could built  
I'd use just that

Because a brick  
Gets dark the way  
The day does  
Red into garnet

Garnet into plum  
Into night  
And the house  
Lights up inside

And it always  
Looks old always  
Keeps the wind  
And the wolf away

Say those who measure  
By catastrophe  
Enough for me  
The color of it

A quiet kind of  
Meat like us  
Space sounds different  
In brick rooms.

10 February 2001

---

---

every single person who knows me  
knows at least one thing about me that I don't know

to accumulate those awarenesses  
would outweigh a decade of analysis

but they don't know that they know  
and they don't know I don't know what they know

so asking is all

\* \* \* \* \*

every single person I know  
knows at least one thing about the world that I don't know

and how can I know what to ask them  
so they know which of all my doubts to answer

so asking is all.

10 February 2001

## THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

Stand there  
and let her in

be a wall  
like that one  
the ancients threw out  
into the mountains

a line in space  
defining something  
bigger than people  
can understand

a gesture  
made into the world

bigger than the air

Size  
is a terrible music —

call me, I want to tell you  
what I learned, something  
made of silence and doorways and you.

10 February 2001

---

A line between remembering  
and you, you squirrel-agile wind  
among my house, a name  
to break a door down or at midnight  
pour your whole body through my keyhole  
and stand before me in my locked room  
bringing me greetings from the philanthropists of hell.

11 February 2001

---

the wind howled this morning and woke me  
the wolf of it having at the house

and if there has to be a wolf let it be the one indoors  
prowls the empty spaces of the house and makes them signify

this is a pathway this is prey  
this is an interesting thing I found to show you

but hardly ever would you wake up and see.  
I'm sorry, darling. Now I will keep watch

now I have heard the wind repeat your word.

11 February 2001

## RAGA PANCHAM

So don't ask me about it, I don't know,  
It's just the weather happening very fast  
A wind made out of sunlight and a falling tree  
Breaking other people's branches as it comes

Here is the beginning of the hand  
And here is water  
Spilled fast across the kneecap  
The food is busy remembering

What must it be like to eaten (Jonah for instance)  
And then turn into the meat  
Of the very creature that swallowed you  
(Jonah can't help you here)

and here is your small life dissolving  
in something big, something that forgets you  
but is you and does things in the world  
that you do too, you are part of the doing

not like reefer-crazy Village audiences  
cheering on a kamikaze saxophone  
you're an actual part of everything this thing does  
you make love to its wife you

in turn swallow things just like yourself  
a universal cannibal malgré lui  
and then you ride out of town at dawn  
carsick in the too fast Camaro

this other bigger self of yours is driving  
into the nightmare of consuming  
and everything is suddenly a long time ago  
before all you were turned into food.

11 February 2001